



Red Door

FAMILY SHELTER

*Ending family homelessness...
one family at a time*



Shelter News Spring 2011

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Recommended Charity

Highlight:

Charity Intelligence Canada recommends the Red Door once again!

Charity Intelligence Canada, a non-profit organization that researches and analyzes Canada's charities to enable donors to make informed and effective giving decisions, has once again deemed the Red Door Family Shelter as one of their Recommended Charities for the 2010-2011 year!

The Red Door was one of only 36 Canadian Charities to receive this recommendation.

<http://www.reddoorshelter.ca>

One Woman's Journey

My name is Anne. I want to share my story with you to give you a glimpse of my journey and to let you know how the Red Door helped change my life.

The reality of abuse is that it can happen to *anyone*. I was married, I had an education, two beautiful young children, a nice house with a pool, all the things that are supposed to be the mark of success and the "good life". That's what it looked like on the outside, but on the inside, I was crying.

Not a day would go by where I wouldn't have some kind of anxiety or panic attack because of my husband's aggression. It was really the ongoing emotional cruelty and mental anguish that he caused me and my children. My daughter was only 12 months old, but my young son Jacob was old enough to feel the tension in the house. He heard the yelling and the screaming every night. When Jacob wouldn't go to bed, my husband would rage and swear at him, and shake him in his crib. When I intervened, his aggression would turn against me. At 2 and a half years old, Jacob still didn't speak.

It's easy to be in an abusive situation and think it's normal. You just sink down into that prison because you don't know that there are resources out there to help you. But then, things just get to a certain point where you just can't take it anymore. I knew that my children were in jeopardy if we stayed any longer, but still, all these questions were going through my head: Can I really leave my home and life behind? Am I really abused *enough*? I still didn't fully realize it until I actually made the call and the woman on the other end told me "you are abused and you need help".

When we arrived at the Red Door it was a total shock for me and for the children. It really registered for us when we finally sat down in the family room, looked at each other and just started to cry. The children were scared and I couldn't help but keep questioning myself: did I make the right decision? One of the other mothers came up to me and hugged me. "It'll be alright". It was that immediate sense of family that made me realize that despite everything, this was truly the first day of a new beginning for us.

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There were just so many levels of support there, from taking care of the necessary legal arrangements, to providing little things like diapers or shampoo if we needed it. But for me it was the power of other women coming together to share their stories that brought me through it. The weekly meeting nights and workshop activities gave us all a sense of collective peace and constant reassurance. It was really therapy that you could never place a dollar value on.

Most of all, I'm grateful for the help they gave my son through the children's programs and also connecting him with CDI (Child Development Institute). You can't imagine how happy I am to see him come out of his shell and smile again.

We didn't stay for very long, just under 2 months, but honestly for me, the Red Door provided that brief sanctuary that I desperately needed to get back control over my life and to begin to build a healthy future for my son and daughter. The resources that they connected us with have been invaluable - finding housing, therapy support, daycare for my children, and even the food bank when we need it. It's really like we're still part of that family, knowing that our Outreach Worker is there for

us anytime we need her. With that kind of support behind you, there's no way you can't succeed.

I just can't say thank you enough to the Red Door for giving me a new beginning.

So I urge you, tell other people about the Red Door, and get involved in anyway you can. Organizations like this are so important because there are so many other women out there who are caught in desperate situations and need a way out. I make it my part to share my story and to tell people about the Red Door and their work. I want other women to know about the resources that are available so that they don't have to live through fear and violence like I did. If by doing so I can help save just one other woman like me, I would be forever grateful.



Anne is now a licensed Paralegal and will be returning to Law School in the fall to pursue a career in Criminal Law.

Program Spotlight: Art Therapy

Well over 50% of all of our shelter residents are children. To help them cope with some of the trauma and loss that they experience, we provide a number of programs that offer support to those children dealing with emotional issues. With the help of our generous funders, we were able to introduce a new Art Therapy program this year to provide specialized counseling and additional support for young children. The sessions provide unique and creative projects for children aged 4 – 12. Under the guidance of a trained art therapist the children have a special place to feel comfortable sharing their issues, and are introduced to safe and healthy ways of expressing themselves.

A year-end exhibition, sponsored by the Junior League of Toronto will feature artwork by children who have participated in the program, along with students from local schools. Art work will be auctioned off with all of the proceeds to the Red Door.

Thank you to our generous funders:

Junior League of Toronto, McLean Foundation, J.P. Bickell Foundation, and The Conn Smythe Foundation



JOY: Children's Art Show

June 9th, 2011
The Great Hall, 1087 Queen St. W
6pm - 8pm

Screening for Domestic Violence Benefits Women: Study

The Canadian Press, March 8, 2011

A new study shows that screening all women who come to a health-care facility increases the number who admit to being abused by their partner.

This represents a major shift in thinking about the value of universal screening programs for domestic violence. Past research has shown universal screening does not help reduce domestic abuse or improve health outcomes for women.

The research and health-care policy communities have long believed there has been insufficient evidence to support such programs. But a study led by Patricia O'Campo, director of the Centre for Inner City Research at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, reached a different conclusion.

O'Campo, whose analysis appears in the journal *Social Science and Medicine*, said past studies have measured the effectiveness of universal screening programs in terms of whether they result in less abuse. However, she said that's not the best measure of success because there are so many, sometimes tentative, steps involved in the process, many of which are outside the health-care system.

Effective screening programs were found to be those that are those that also provided immediate access to support services from community agencies.

There were also standardized questions about abuse and clear guidelines — such as talking to patients privately, ongoing staff training and support of their hospital and senior administrators.

“When the right supports are in place for staff, then the screening process can be very effective and more women can be helped.”

Programs that showed the most improvement in screening rates provided immediate access to support services for such issues as mental health, housing, health care, employment and legal issues. Some programs had on-site case managers; others made immediate referrals to community agencies.

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A Look Behind the Red Door

More than 34% of the families we support at the Red Door are single women or mothers fleeing an abusive partner.

The first step when they arrive is the development of a safety plan that ensures their abuser will not be able to make any contact with them. While in the shelter we offer a number of programs to support these women including counselling, workshops and peer-support groups. We also help them get connected to all the community resources they need, when they are ready to move back into the community.

Volunteer Spotlight

Grade 12 students from Greenwood Collegiate helped transform our Queen Street Shelter school-age program room from drab to fab! On January 6th and 7th, 9 students arrived with paint, supplies and a vision to make the space a little more inviting and playful for our children. The initiative was part of Grade 12 Challenge Week, where students choose to help out local or international community organizations. We're pleased that they chose the Red Door!

We ended up with a great looking new space that the children just love! “It's really wonderful to have this kind of enthusiasm and support from students” said Roy Bailey, program manager. “It makes all the difference for the children to have a special space made just for them.”



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“It is not helpful to ask a patient to disclose that she’s experiencing violence and then to have no service or help to offer her,” the paper says. “Health-care providers need to have support-service providers on site or to have good connections to services outside the hospital so women get the help they need immediately.”

“Intimate partner violence tends to be a hidden problem,” O’Campo stated. “When health-care providers screen properly, women are willing to disclose and get the help they need. Especially in a place like Canada, where almost every woman

has a doctor and has health insurance, universal screening is a perfect way to get to everybody.”

O’Campo wants to see more screening for abuse. “Even more can be done given that the prevalence of intimate partner violence is one in five during a lifetime.”

The World Report on Violence and Health estimates that 22 to 30 per cent of women in North America suffer physical assault at least once in their lifetime.

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Do you have an amazing event idea?

Do you want to help support us by getting others involved? Help Fundraise for the Red Door!

Holding a fundraising event can be a great way to support the Red Door. Get involved, be active in making a difference and spread the word about the Red Door in your community. There are endless ways to be creative with a fundraiser event. Here are some great ideas to get you started:

- Neighbourhood Yard Sale
- Dress Down Days
- Golf Tournament
- Car Wash
- Bake Sale
- Raffles/Auctions
- Games Night

Start your own personal fundraising page

Now you can also become your own personal fundraiser. With Canada Helps Giving pages you can set up your own fundraising page for the Red Door. This is an easy and convenient way to collect pledges for events like marathons, sporting event fundraisers, or to request donations in lieu of gifts for birthdays, anniversaries, weddings or other special life events.



For more info on how to get started visit: <http://www.reddoorshelter.ca/special-events>



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